Introduction

Terence Wesley-Smith

Anthony Giddens has noted that talk about globalization "has come from nowhere to be almost everywhere" in recent years (1999, 1). This is hardly surprising considering the profound effects of the transnational flows of capital, people, and ideas at the heart of the globalization process. Global flows increasingly determine economic conditions for individuals and communities everywhere, as well as shape the contours of their social and political lives. This collection examines some important implications of globalization in the Pacific Islands, with particular reference to its Asian dimensions. It does so through a case study of the Republic of Palau which provides a striking microcosm of some of the economic, cultural, social, and political dynamics that increasingly characterize the contemporary era in the Pacific and elsewhere.

Palau is a small Micronesian island state with a total population of about 17,000. Before independence in 1994 it was administered by the United States as the last remnant of the United Nations Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. It is also a former colony of Japan (1914–1944) and is now inundated by investment, tourists, and migrant workers from Asia. As many as 70,000 tourists, mostly from Japan and Taiwan, pass through these islands each year, catered for by a largely Asian owned and operated industry. Some 13,000 indigenous Palauans host a foreign workforce of at least 4,000 temporary residents (chiefly from the Philippines, but also from Taiwan and Bangladesh). At the same time, an estimated 7,000 Palauans live in other Pacific islands and the United States. Confounding a popular image of an island culture isolated in time and space, Palau is entangled in a broad web of economic, social, and cultural forces stretching to Tokyo, Taipei, Guam, Manila, Honolulu, Washington DC, and beyond.

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Palau is not the only place in the Pacific being remade by capital, people, and ideas cascading across borders. Although earlier financial and human flows from Europe, Asia, and North America radically transformed the cultural and economic landscapes of island places, the globalizing trends of recent years are distinctive in several respects. In the first place, new forms of capital have become important in the region, although much economic activity continues to focus on export agriculture and the extraction of natural resources. Some island nations have become temporary sites for highly mobile manufacturing industries that roam the globe in search of cheap sources of labor. The largest private employer in Sāmoa is now Yasaki, a Japanese company that uses largely female labor to assemble automobile wiring harnesses for export to Australia. Factories in Fiji, the Northern Marianas, and Palau assemble garments for a global industry that epitomizes the current era of geographically dispersed, complex systems of "flexible production." These companies are often attracted to the region by favorable tax regimes, government subsidies, or preferential access to export markets, as well as the prospect of low labor costs. Several Pacific places—most notably Guam, the Northern Marianas, and Tahiti—have recently joined Hawai'i as significant destinations in the global tourist industry, now one of the largest industries in the world.

Migrant labor plays a significant role in both the garment and tourist industries in the Pacific. In Fiji, some of the garment factory labor is imported on contract from China, while in the Northern Marianas and Palau almost all of the workers come from the Philippines and other parts of Asia. Similarly, in several of the prime tourist destinations in the region —Hawai'i, Guam, and Saipan—as well as in Palau, tourist facilities are largely staffed by permanent or temporary migrants from elsewhere. The presence of these workers has profound social, cultural, and political implications for host communities.

The pace of change under the influence of these new types of capital also distinguishes the present era from earlier ones, dominated in most parts of the region by plantation capital. In some places, the tourist industry has expanded at an extremely rapid rate. For example, the number of tourists visiting the Northern Marianas annually rose fourfold in the decade after 1984 to more than a half-million. Visitor numbers in Palau rose by over 60 percent in the second half of the 1990s, and tourism's share of gross national product went from 15 percent in 1991 to 46 percent in 1996 (Fagence 1999, 396–397; Carlile, this issue, 426). The rapid

rate of change also suggests risk and vulnerability, further characteristics of the present era of globalization. The tourism and manufacturing industries are both fiercely competitive, with capital capable of moving rapidly from location to location as global or local conditions shift. This flexibility makes it extremely difficult for host governments to plan and implement coherent national development projects, and for workers to organize to improve their benefits and conditions of work. Bringing in temporary workers from overseas is one strategy used by companies and governments to contain labor costs—and prevent the industry from moving away.

One of the most striking characteristics of contemporary globalization in the Pacific Islands is its increasingly Asian complexion. Japan is now second only to Australia in terms of total aid flows to the region, reflecting Tokyo's extensive economic, strategic, and political interests in the islands (Finin and Wesley-Smith 1997). Taiwanese, Korean, and especially Japanese tourists have largely fueled the recent tourist booms in Guam, the Northern Marianas, and Palau, and Japanese companies dominate the visitor industries in these places. As previously noted, the vast majority of migrant workers flowing into the region in recent decades come from various Asian countries, particularly the Philippines. Filipinos now represent more than 20 percent of the populations of Guam and Palau and, along with other migrant workers, make up more than half the total resident population of the Northern Mariana Islands.

This movement represents the latest in a long series of eastward migrations that started with the original peopling of the islands in the late Pleistocene era, and continued through the colonial period, when large numbers of Asians were brought in to work plantations and mines, particularly in Fiji, Hawai'i, and New Caledonia. Many of these workers stayed in the region, unlike the large numbers of Japanese and Okinawans who worked for the Japanese colonial administration in Micronesia after World War I and temporarily expanded the Japanese sphere of influence in the islands during World War II (Peattie 1988). Of course, Asians are not the only people on the move in the region. In recent decades, Pacific Islanders have formed their own extensive diasporic communities that link the islands to urban locations in Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. These increasingly complex human flows raise profound questions about cultural processes and identities, and challenge conventional distinctions between local, national, and global frames of analysis.

This collection of essays also reflects ongoing attempts to rethink Asia-

Pacific studies at the University of Hawai'i, efforts that have their origins in the intellectual challenges associated with globalization. Contemporary global processes affect the way scholars study the world, and their implications are particularly significant—even threatening—for the branch of scholarship known in the United States as "area studies."

This mode of teaching and learning originated after World War II in the perceived need for American citizens and policymakers to learn more about the rest of the world. For Robert Hall, an early advocate of institutionalized area studies, focusing on the languages, histories, and cultures of "other lands and other peoples" would promote languishing humanities disciplines and link them in productive ways with the emerging social sciences. However, it was Hall's more pragmatic justifications that ultimately resonated with funding agencies increasingly conscious of the strategic and ideological imperatives of the cold war. Knowing about these other places in the changed international conditions of the postwar era was important, he argued, "if we are to survive" (Hall 1948, 16).

If organized area studies had its origins in an essential "us" studying "them" dichotomy, it also institutionalized the idea that cultural and other differences were enclosed by readily identifiable geopolitical boundaries. Perhaps inevitably, the area studies programs that proliferated in US universities in the postwar decades were organized around existing nation-state boundaries and prevailing notions of world areas and regions. As the president of the Social Science Research Council noted in 1996, "the last half-century, characterized by a nation-state system and superpower confrontation, has been an historical period during which it made sense to organize knowledge production with distinctions between Asia and Western Europe, or Africa and the Middle East, or Latin America and the Soviet Union much in mind" (Prewitt 1996, 2).

The conceptual and institutional structures of Asia-Pacific studies at the University of Hawai'i reflect the legacy of these historical imperatives. The university's School of Hawaiian, Asian, and Pacific Studies consists of a significant number of largely autonomous area studies centers, each devoted to a particular bounded slice of the Asia-Pacific region, and each bearing the imprint of its own particular institutional history and scholarly culture. The Centers for Hawaiian Studies and for Pacific Islands Studies administer separate degree programs and activities. The remaining Asia-focused centers are either country (China, Japan, Korea, Philippines) or region based (South Asia, Southeast Asia). While undergraduate and graduate degrees are offered in Asian studies, students are still encouraged to concentrate on the sub-areas represented by the different centers.

This highly compartmentalized institutional structure helps to preserve and reinforce a nation-state and region-centered view of the world, leaving little room to actively contemplate the historical and contemporary forces driving transnationalism—let alone those producing or undermining the boundaries around which the enterprise itself is organized (see, eg, Dirlik 1992). Dissatisfaction with this approach to area studies and an associated pedagogy has generated a number of spirited debates in recent years. For example, there has been much discussion about the value of courses that are exclusively country or region specific, as opposed to those that are thematically organized, as well as some attempt to teach across programmatic boundaries (see, eg, Wesley-Smith 1995).

However, much of the recent impetus to rethink area studies at the University of Hawai'i and elsewhere in the United States has come from outside the academy. The so-called crisis in area studies has been precipitated in large part by the funding agencies, whose support has always been a key factor in the establishment and growth of area studies programs. As Stanley Heginbotham noted, the passing of the cold-war era profoundly affected attitudes toward international education in the United States, and it was not long before the major funding agencies began to rethink their priorities (1994). The Andrew Mellon Foundation was among the first of the major agencies to shift its resources away from traditionally organized area studies, and by the late 1990s many others had followed suit. In 1996, Social Science Research Council President Kenneth Prewitt explained that his organization's shift from area studies to "area based knowledge" reflected a changed global order. The new agenda for international scholarship, he said, must go beyond "an American interest in exotica for Cold War purposes" (Heilbrunn 1996, 54; Prewitt 1996).

In 1997 the Ford Foundation launched a major initiative designed to "revitalize" area studies in light of what program officer Toby Volkman called "a dramatically changed and increasingly interconnected world." According to Volkman, the in-depth knowledge of particular places that area studies has always produced was still needed, but it was now imperative to revisit the field's "basic premises and procedures." Among other things, this involves questioning "the notion of distinct and stable areas, with congruent cultural, linguistic, and geographical identities," and finding new ways to understand how local "identities and cultures are being formed and re-formed" in their interactions with powerful global forces (Volkman 1999).

Rather than dictating revised terms for international scholarship in the post–cold war United States, as other foundations have tended to do, the

Ford initiative invited new ideas and approaches. The initiative came at an opportune time for the University of Hawai'i, as the process of rethinking Asia-Pacific studies was already under way there. A one-year research and instructional project called Moving Cultures: Remaking Asia-Pacific Studies was funded as part of Ford's Crossing Borders initiative, and subsequently extended for a further three years.[1] It advanced the premise that area studies could be remade by examining hybrid cultural sites created by capital, people, and ideas flowing across geopolitical borders. By focusing on liminal places where cultural and other boundaries seemed particularly blurred and porous, the project aimed to challenge entrenched institutional and conceptual divisions within the School of Hawaiian, Asian, and Pacific Studies. These divisions limit dialogue between faculty and students in the various nation- and region-based centers and programs, and serve to obscure increasingly important linkages between different parts of the region.

The focus on dynamic borderzones in Asia-Pacific was meant to facilitate investigation of important contemporary global flows. But it was also designed to defy conventional approaches to area studies by destabilizing the spatial, cultural, and geopolitical categories often used to organize such work. The Republic of Palau was an appropriate site to launch these efforts, particularly since it offered the possibility of crossing a major conceptual divide between "Asia" and "the Pacific Islands," spatial and cultural categories usually treated quite separately by area studies practitioners. The Moving Cultures project brought together an interdisciplinary team of specialists in various Asian and Pacific "areas" as well as Palauan leaders and academics, individuals who would not normally work together on a sustained basis. The team examined local issues and transformations associated with Asian workers, tourists, and investment in Palau, as well as the global forces driving these powerful circuits of exchange. This was a highly unusual approach to Asia-Pacific studies, and one that recognized some of the challenges "moving cultures" present to notions of the "local" in an era of globalization.

The Moving Cultures project also aimed to correct some of the power imbalances between the agents (researchers and students) and objects (studied communities) of inquiry still inherent in much area studies work, despite extensive efforts to "decolonize" or "indigenize" particular fields of study (see, eg, Wesley-Smith 1995). Although this was probably the most important component of the project—and of reforming area studies generally—it was by far the most complex and challenging. At the

outset we knew only that we wanted to make Moving Cultures activities "genuinely collaborative." By the time Stage 1 of the project finished, we were just beginning to understand the enormity of such a task. Although many Palauan colleagues participated in the project, the extent to which this served to "level the playing field" is by no means clear. In an important cultural and epistemological sense it was still "our" game, played out according to the dictates and conventions of western scholarship. As I have written in another context, we were effectively engaged in "a search for balance within a discourse that is itself thoroughly unbalanced in its approach to the world, already firmly committed to a particular intellectual tradition and ontology" (Wesley-Smith 2000, 9).[2]

Nevertheless, the idea of a research and instructional project focused on migrant workers and tourists generated an enthusiastic response in Palau. Understandably, Palauan leaders and intellectuals had little interest in remaking area studies in the United States, but they were keenly interested in the issues we wished to study. As Vice President Tommy Remengesau, Jr noted when welcoming the research team to Palau, "The contemporary convergence of Asian influences with local Pacific island forces has been all but ignored by researchers and scholars" (1997). Palauans were also eager to participate as full partners in the project, and we established a flexible, multifaceted, and enduring collaborative relationship with Palau Community College. The partnership was initially negotiated during a pre-project visit to Palau, and included both teaching and research activities.

Six instructors at the college were directly involved in project activities, and the Palau team was guided by a local advisory committee that included representatives from the community college, Palau Resource Institute (a local nongovernment organization), and various government agencies. Palauan participants traveled to Honolulu for the initial meeting of the Moving Cultures instructional team, and Palau Community College hosted a workshop for project researchers in November 1997. The workshop provided an opportunity for the researchers to discuss their projects with local participants and with each other, and to listen to local views of the issues in a series of community forums organized for the occasion. Between meetings, participants in all locations used the Moving Cultures website to share resources and discuss issues.[3]

Moving Cultures team members conducted research in Palau, the Philippines, Japan, and Taiwan, before assembling again to present their findings at a capstone conference held in Honolulu in June 1998. Most of the

papers in this collection are revised versions of those contributions.[4] The contributions are organized into two general groups, those having to do with guest workers, and those dealing with tourism-related issues.

In their paper on changing meanings of work, Karen Nero, Fermina Brel Murray, and Michael Burton investigate the extent to which powerful global forces have affected key culturally based values and attitudes in Palau. Sandra Pierantozzi, a businesswoman and senator in the *Olbiil Era Kelulau* (Palau National Congress) is less sanguine about the implications of the recent influx of foreign workers to her country. Her frank and personal appraisal of the issues for Palauans is complemented by Dean Alegado and Gerard Finin, who identify the distinctive characteristics of contemporary migration out of the Philippines, and examine some of the difficulties faced by Filipino migrants in Palau.

Isebong Asang uses the results of her research among Palauans in Hawai'i to raise questions about official plans to bring expatriate Palauans back to Palau. In "Remaking Footprints" Asang, herself an expatriate Palauan, also gives readers a sense of some of the emerging tensions between diasporic and resident Palauans over issues of power and development in the new republic, as well as over questions of identity and citizenship. In the final contribution on migration issues, geographers Jon Goss and Bruce Lindquist situate Palau in a broad historical and spatial framework of population movement in the Asia-Pacific region. Their paper, "Placing Movers," argues that there is nothing particularly new about population movement in the region, and reminds readers that temporary migrants often become permanent residents of their host countries.

The influx of guest workers is, of course, closely connected with the emergence of Palau as a site for Asian tourism and investment. Lonny Carlile draws on his understanding of the political economy of Japanese tourism to examine the forces affecting the development of tourism in Palau, and identifies the distinctive characteristics of the local industry. Japanese cultural anthropologist Shinji Yamashita examines the images that Japanese tourists carry with them to Palau, and traces their historical, and in some cases, colonial, origins and impacts. China specialist Eric Harwit looks at the recent and dramatic upsurge of Taiwanese interest in Palau, and demonstrates that this is driven more by Taipei's strategic search for diplomatic support than by business or other considerations. Minoru Ueki looks at some of the environmental consequences of tourism and other development activity in Palau, and discusses a variety of

local responses. Finally, Palau Comunity College librarian Jane Barnwell identifies key materials dealing with Palau's economic development.

As noted earlier, these papers were produced as part of an ongoing effort to devise new, more appropriate ways of doing area studies. Their appearance in this journal is significant because, as a publication devoted to Pacific Islands affairs, material related to Asia would not normally be considered within its purview. Indeed, the editorial board of *The Contemporary Pacific* has been rethinking other aspects of its mission and operating procedures as well. In 1999 incoming Editor Geoffrey White reiterated a commitment to strengthening "the journal's engagement with indigenous concerns," an emphasis that is certainly reflected in this special issue. White also noted that *The Contemporary Pacific* has always been a site for "thoughtful reflection about the conventions and politics of scholarship itself" (White 1999, vii–viii). As Guest Editor I have taken some liberties with the journal's practice of differentiating between "articles" and "dialogue" in the presentation of material. Although the distinction between these categories has never been clearly stated, it might be inferred that a hierarchy of "scholarliness" is involved. The present collection includes a variety of voices, writing styles, and claims to authority. However, I have chosen not to attempt to separate out papers that, under other circumstances, might be regarded as candidates for the Dialogue section of the journal.

Attempts to remake Asia-Pacific studies continue in Stage II of Moving Cultures, a three-year project that began in August 1999. In this stage, the emphasis has moved from research activities to the classroom, the principal site where the culture of area studies is constructed and reproduced. In a concerted effort to "bring area studies to the areas studied" instructors at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and Palau Community College are working collaboratively on curriculum and pedagogical issues, and forging new relationships with other educational institutions in the region. A course exploring the local implications of global flows of capital, people, and ideas has been developed jointly with faculty at the University of the South Pacific in Fiji. It will be taught simultaneously in Fiji and Hawai'i in the year 2000, using interactive computer-based technology to link participants at the various sites. Canterbury University in Aotearoa/New Zealand will join in for one section of the course. A similar multisited class linking Mānoa with Ateneo de Zamboanga in Mindanao in the southern Philippines is planned for 2001. These efforts are designed to make area studies more appropriate for an era of moving cultures.

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Notes

1 Some of the material used here is drawn from proposals submitted to the Ford Foundation for Stage 1 and Stage 2 funding, which can be found on the Moving Cultures website <http://www.hawaii.edu/movingcultures/>

2 Arjun Appadurai identified the need for critical reflection on the broad cultural assumptions inherent in the whole notion of "research" and challenged scholars to move beyond "a model for internationalizing social science whose main concern is with improving how others practice our precepts" (1997, 59).

3 An undergraduate course, Asia in the Pacific, was developed as part of the project and taught at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa in spring 1998.

4 Sandra Pierantozzi's paper is not the one she delivered in Honolulu, and Minoru Ueki's "Eco-consciousness and Development in Palau" was solicited more recently, as was Jane Barnwell's bibliographic essay.

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